

Online and Mobile Banking – Digital Differentiation Strategies

Two of the biggest trends that we are seeing at Arizona Federal Credit Union are the steady decline in branch traffic and transactions, along with the growth of mobile banking. Of course, these trends are not unique to us – they are nationwide or even worldwide trends. Recognizing these fundamental shifts in consumer behaviors has led us to adopt a “digital first” retail strategy. This is simply a natural progression of our commitment – that started at our founding back in 1936 as Phoenix City Employees Federal Credit Union - to providing a full range of financial services to our members. But it is significant that when we consider new products and services we first design the optimum digital experience for our members to fulfill them, and then design a branch experience if applicable. Up until recently, the branch experience usually took priority.

Naturally, we have been offering a robust online banking platform for many years that is quite popular with our members; in fact our penetration rate of online banking is about 90,000 members out of approximately 120,000 total members. After introducing mobile banking a few years ago, we saw a dramatic uptake: we now have 63,000 mobile bankers with nearly half of them mobile banking-only members! With more powerful and lower cost smartphones available, and with younger members joining, we fully expect these numbers to keep growing dramatically.

In many ways, our goal is to enable our members to do anything that they can do online, or even in the branch, on their favorite mobile device – adding convenience and saving them valuable time. In the Metro Phoenix area, we have a wide range of member demographics. We strive to serve all of them in a way that is most convenient for their particular lifestyle. We want to fully serve the “digital natives” without alienating other members which means that we still have branches available for members to come meet with us face to face. We are still finding that many of our members still like personal interactions when it comes to handling their finances. Our branch staff is trained to help with financial advice and financial coaching which is what many members are looking for now with their branch visits.

In addition to our digital first strategy, what differentiates us from our competitors is our agility. We strive to maintain close relations with our members and listen to their needs and concerns and then act upon them quickly. Because we have a strong commitment from our Board of Directors, we were quick to implement cutting edge technologies like biometrics and wearables. For example, we support fingerprint biometrics on both iPhone and Android phones, and we also offer iris biometrics to make it easier for our members to securely login. Our goal is to remain very efficient in our operations and continue to focus on delivering great member service through every channel, while always keeping our digital channels up to date with the latest features and functionality.



Eric Givens

Senior Director of Digital Banking, Arizona FCU

Eric Givens, Senior Director of Digital Banking at Arizona Federal Credit Union, oversees the development and implementation of all digital banking products and emerging payment strategies that increase utilization and preserve or further Arizona Federal's participation in member payment and purchase activity. He is responsible for evaluating and recommending digital services, biometric technology, and payment methods that the credit union should implement or partner with for strategic benefit. Eric also oversees the digital branch team that is responsible for digital account openings, loan originations, and creating more efficient processes through API, SSO, and developer integration, and manages ATM vendor relationships and implementations for the credit union.



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